Air services in Himachal Pradesh

4177. SHRI SURESH BHARDWAJ: Will the Minister of CIVILAVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Himachal Pradesh has airports at three places but the Indian Airlines has no flights to these places;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether his Ministry has any proposal for expansion of the airport's and to start air services; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The airports in Himachal Pradesh at Shimla, Kullu and Kangra are suitable for operation of smaller type of aircraft only. Due to non-availability of suitable type of aircraft in its fleet, Indian Airlines has not been able to operate flights to/from airports in Himachal Pradesh.

(c) and (d) Kangra airport has been developed for ATR 42-321 aircraft. The commissioning of runway can be done by Airports Authority of India (AAI) only after removal of identified obstacles and diversion of road by Government of Himachal Pradesh. In case of Kullu airport, the extension of runway is under examination. In case of Shimla airport, AAI has undertaken feasibility study for extension of runway. Further, Indian Airlines has a proposal to lease six 50 seater ATR-42 aircraft for operation to short sector regional routes on the domestic networks by Alliance Air. Dharmshala and Shimla in the State of Himachal Pradesh are included in the list of stations proposed to be linked with these aircraft.

Induction of new aircraft on Kolkata-Silchar route

4178. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the old Boeing aircrafts which operate on the bi-weekly Kolkata—Silchar route are extremely dangerous and highly accident prone particularly in the monsoon season;

(b) whether there is an acute shortage of aircrafts in the Indian Airlines; and